

Deposit from clients must
be "back up" ... pg 3



Enjoy Aruba's
57th carnival

Pick your winner and help
Aruba's handicapped pg 5

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Thursday, February 3, 2011

THE MORNING NEWS

Your Source for local news in English

Caya G.F. Betico Croes 111 T. 588-9517 F. 5889518.

The World will refer to the "Aruba Declaration" on obesity



See story on page 4

Bob Smink drives away with a brand new Chevrolet Camaro



On Monday at 1:40 a.m. Bob Smink from Curacao, received the surprise of his life. He went to the Crystal Casino for some leisure gambling on the "Mystery Jackpot" and suddenly he hit the perfect combination to win the grand prize, a brand new 2011 Chevrolet Camaro. He received many congrats from casino patrons and staff and personel of Crystal Casino. Photo shows a very ecstatic Bob receiving the keys from the Casino manager.

Next monthly Aruba Culinary Festival is this Monday

DIVI LINKS -- For an exciting taste of Aruba and cultural experience, the Aruba Culinary Festival takes place on the first Monday of every month at the scenic outdoor plaza at Divi Links (below Mulligan's). The next festival will be held on Monday, February 7, from 6 – 9 pm.

Restaurants of the Aruba Gastronomic Association (AGA) will be serving their delicious signature dishes and Arion Wine Company will be pouring its fine vintages. Local artists and artisans and live music will lend an authentic Aruban touch.

Savor the international flavors of AGA and Divi restaurants such as Amazonia, Aqua Grill, Driftwood, French Steak House, Gasparito, Giorgio's,

La Trattoria El Faro Blanco, Mulligan's, The Old Man & the Sea and Windows on Aruba. Learn more about food and wine, compliments of a professional chef and a wine specialist.

Admission of US \$ 15.00 (awg. 25,-) includes 4 food tickets plus 2 wine tickets (or 4 soft drink tickets). The Aruba Culinary Festival, perfect for locals as well as tourists, is sponsored by Divi Resorts and the Aruba Gastronomic Association.

Great food, fine wines, fun ambiance, wonderful music, scenic venue...a perfect evening awaits you!

For more information, contact Aruba Gastronomic Association at 586 1266 or 592 6244.

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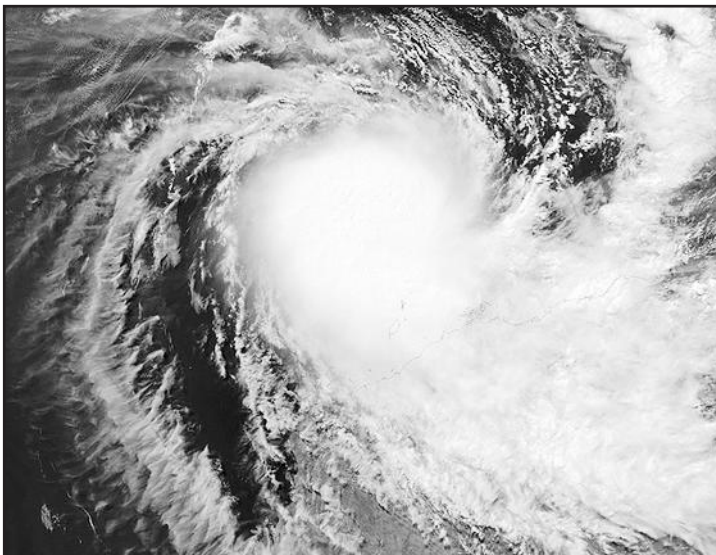
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TUESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

'Worst ever' monster cyclone hits Australia



INNISFAIL, Australia (AFP) - A terrifying top-strength cyclone slammed into Australia's populous northeast coast, with officials warning it could be one of the most lethal storms in the nation's history.

Howling winds whipped up by Severe Tropical Cyclone Yasi with speeds of up to 290

kilometers (181 miles) per hour ripped off roofs, felled trees and cut power lines as the storm crossed the Queensland coast.

Yasi, the worst storm to hit the area in a century, made landfall around midnight, the Bureau of Meteorology said, after the cyclone was upgraded early in the day to a category five storm from category four.

"The large destructive core of Cyclone Yasi is starting to cross the coast between Innisfail and Cardwell, with a dangerous storm tide and battering waves to the south of the cyclone centre," the bureau said in a statement.

The storm made landfall near Mission Beach, which lies in the heart of a tourism and agriculture-rich area 180 kilometres south of Cairns, gateway to the Great Barrier Reef.

"Yasi, category four, will weaken as it continues to move in a west-southwesterly direction," State disaster coordinator Ian Stewart said deaths in Yasi's terrible path were "very likely".

"It will take all of us and all of our strength to overcome this. The next 24 hours I think are going to be very, very tough ones for everybody," noted State Premier Anna Bligh echoed grim..

Bloody clashes rock Cairo as regime stands firm

CAIRO, Egypt (AFP) - Partisans of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak stormed the Cairo stronghold of anti-regime protesters yesterday, sparking bloody clashes in which hundreds were injured and a soldier reported killed.

Washington, which has called for restraint since demonstrations broke out nine days ago, deplored the violence against "peaceful protesters" while UN chief Ban Ki-moon said the attacks on demonstrators were "unacceptable."

The European Union added its voice to calls from US President Barack Obama for the transition from Mubarak's three-decade-long rule to begin immediately after the veteran president announced late on Tuesday that he would not seek re-election in September.

But the Egyptian foreign ministry said such calls "sought to inflame the internal situation," while Vice President Omar Suleiman, newly appointed just this week, insisted there could be no dialogue with the opposition until all the protesters went home.

From early afternoon until well into the night, regime supporters and opponents threw stones and battled with sticks



Egyptian army soldiers watch as thousands of protesters opposed to President Hosni Mubarak (foreground) clash with and pro-Mubarak demonstrators in Cairo's Tahrir square on February 02, 2011.
AFP PHOTO

and fists in Cairo's Tahrir Square, the epicentre of the nine straight days of protests that have rocked the Egyptian regime and sent shock waves around the Arab world.

Tension had been rising from early morning when Mubarak supporters began staging their own rallies around Cairo, saying the president represented stability amid growing insecurity, and branding as "traitors" those who want his departure.

A hard core of tens of thousands had remained on the streets through the night, angry at the 82-year-old's refusal to

step down immediately in line with the demands of opposition leaders for a clean break with his regime.

Not satisfied with Mubarak's insistence late Tuesday that he would serve out the rest of his term and ignoring army appeals for them to go home, the protesters vowed to stay in the square until he left.

Witnesses and AFP correspondents said bands of Mubarak supporters raided the square without warning, some on camels and horses, creating mayhem that quickly degenerated into violent clashes.

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HORBAT MIDRAS : Picture shows a mosaic of a Byzantine period church which was discovered following excavations in Horbat Midras, near the Israeli town of Beit Shemesh.

The Byzantine church was built at around the 5-7 centuries over the ruins of large Jewish settlement that dates from the Second Temple period until its destruction during the Bar Kokhba uprising in 135CE.

Some scholars propose to identify the place as the residence and the tomb of the prophet Zechariah.



AFP PHOTO



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Scan SETAR N.V.'s barcode and win prizes every week!

Aruba's national telecommunication company, SETAR N.V., has launched its most recent campaign, "Scan the Barcode," which offers great prizes every week. All SETAR clients who own a Blackberry can scan the barcode by visiting SETAR's website www.setar.aw and thru its link on Facebook. Participants can also directly go on SETAR's page on Facebook to scan the barcode.

The prizes are, among others, Blackberry 8520, credit on telephone calls, Blackberry cases and even an admission ticket to the Calypso & Roadmarch Contest 2011 this coming Saturday, February 5; so better hurry and enter!

During the final of the Ca-

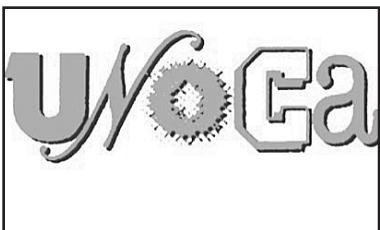


lypso & Roadmarch Contest at Joe Laveist Sportpark, 5 youngsters will circulate the stadium with the SETAR barcode on their t-shirts; participants present at the event can scan this barcode to still participate in the campaign.

The "Scan the Barcode" campaign continues until the end of the Carnival season, which is March 8, 2011.

"Biahe Creativo" project at the Aruba Art School is Sold out!

SAN NICOLAS - The Aruba Art School in San Nicolas announces that its Project "Biahe Creativo" - Creative Journey with a Carnival ambience for this Saturday, February 5, is sold out. Seatings are limited to



ensure that each student gets the necessary attention.

The Aruba Art School informs that there are no more inscriptions days for the event. All those who wanted to participate at this event are kindly asked to stay tuned for the next journey to take place during the course of the year.

For more information interested persons can contact Aruba Art School at tel. 584-9168 and ask for Sonia Giromus-Goeloe or Lucaskjo Smith or contact UNOCA and ask for Magriet LeeTromp at tel. 583-5681.



Combat Dengue

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Parliamentarians visit Family Planning Center

ORANJESTAD -- Some members of the Parliamentary Health Commission made a courtesy call to the Aruba Family Planning Center. Director of the Family Planning Center, Mrs. Evelyn Yarzagaray along with Mrs. Lilian Ras-Buckley, Board member, provided the group with a great deal of information regarding the operations and projects of the center.

The recent project "I love my body," which began in January turned out to be a resounding success. This project is designed to specifically stimulate young people to learn to respect their own bodies. The Center is charged with dispensing information regarding sexuality and its consequences. They also focus on the different sexually transmitted diseases that can be spread through sexual behavior in our community. Famia Plania receives many visits from young people and adults seeking information.

Famia Plania provides information in several ways, for example, through visits to the schools where they share information with students at school,

giving lessons on sexuality, or by giving information to young people and adults who visit the office in search of information or products. Students would often visit in search of information for their school's projects or to simply chat with the staff. There are also those who are members of the Famia Plania, who walk in looking for supplies like birth control pills, condoms, or birth control injections. The "I love my body" campaign has made an impact on our young people and the hope is that this will change their sexual behavior. The concern is not only for the sexual activity but especially with reference to venereal diseases. News reports indicate that there is an increase in the number of young people becoming infected with venereal diseases. Also, the number of young people contracting AIDS has increased, which is an alarming phenomenon. Famia Plania's main focus is on prevention.

They are specifically focused on prevention with respect to teen pregnancy and on the prevention of venereal diseases.



Lorna Varlack

The "I love my body" is also particularly directed to stimulating a healthy self esteem, to warning against the use of drugs and alcohol and to develop a love for one's body and total self.

The Parliamentarians were very impressed with the initiative of the Famia Plania Center and urges the community and business concerns to support their efforts and to provide financial support in the form of donations so they can continue working on the behalf of our young people.

Deposit from clients must be "back up" and not Income for WEB & Elmar

ORANJESTAD -- Donny Rasmijn, Aruban Parliamentarian, has observed that constantly certain wrong practices are being committed by our utility companies. He recently reported that the gas supply company, Arugas, is overcharging for the 20 liter bottles being used in homes either for dryers or for cooking. Subsequently he cites that the monetary deposit that both Elmar and Web collects from their clients is not justified. It is understandable that the utility companies have their monthly expenses for their operations specifically for the Fuel Oil used to produce water and electricity. If in a month 15% of their clients were unable to make their payments on time, the company can request a deposit to cover that cost. If the company decides to levy an interest charge for late payments, or for reconnection of water meters, this, according to Rasmijn would be justifiable. However, as it stands now the client is required to pay a deposit to Elmar, to WEB and to Arugas without receiving



any kind of benefit; this he asserts is not right.

The only one who profits from these deposits is the companies without offering the client any kind of vantage or interest for his money.

The company could introduce a system whereby those who are faithful and timely payers could be required to pay a smaller deposit as their risk is minimal. In the event a client is unable to make a payment on time, the company could deduct the interest from his deposit and later have him repay this slowly so he can be brought back to his usual standing. In the event of having to reconnect a

meter for a well-paying client, the company could deduct the reconnection fine from his deposit.

Recently it was reported in one newspaper that an 88 year old well paying citizen was levied a Fls.200 fine because she failed to notice that she had an outstanding account of Fls.14,65. For 20 long months this client was unaware of an outstanding amount and WEB continued to collect her Fls.10 every month for this reason. Ironically, this 88 year citizen had a deposit of Fls.75 in WEB's covers. Why could they not have deducted her Fls.14, 65 from this deposit so that she did not have to spend Fls.200 needlessly?

It is true that the price of Fuel Oil fluctuates frequently, for this reason it would be wise for WEB and Elmar to make certain adjustments to the deposit situation to avoid unnecessary suffering on the part of our citizens. Any deposit paid must be considered a backup for the client and not end up in WEB and Elmar's covers, according to the Parliamentarian.

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instantaneously fall in love with what they have.

ShabbyShic is located at Avenida Milio Croes 12. Opening hours are from 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. non-stop from Monday thru Saturday.

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"I wish I had invented blue jeans. They have expression, modesty, sex appeal, simplicity - all I hope for in my clothes."

Yves Saint Laurent



The World will Refer to the "Aruba Declaration" on Obesity

A team of experts visited Aruba and during a two and a half days series of meetings they worked on the preparation for the upcoming June PAHO conference to be held here.

More than 100 government leaders and health experts from different countries are expected to be in Aruba for the June conference. This will place Aruba on the world map and countries will be referring to the Aruba Declaration after this declaration is deliberated and enacted here in Aruba in the World Health Organization meeting.

Minister Visser is an expert on the subject of obesity and has been emphasizing the need for proper health among our children. His expertise has taken him as far as the White House where he was invited to discuss with the White House health team regarding the problem of obesity. His vision extends beyond Aruba. He would love to see the world taking this matter seriously.

During the upcoming "Year End Meeting" of the United Nations, which is scheduled to convene in New York, countries will meet together to deliberate on the "Millennium Goals." This is the second time in the history of the United Nations that a health issue has been placed on the agenda as one of the challenges of the world. The first time this took place was in 2000 with the problem of HIV and this year it is Obesity that they succeeded in placing on the agenda.

It is for this reason that the deliberations on obesity with the various experts here last week was so important as this will be one of the themes to be discussed in the PAHO meeting. Among the representatives here last week were, Obetech Obesity Research Center, and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention of the USA. Also, the president of PAHEF, president of IASO Brazil, representatives of Manglarato Hospital of Ecuador, and Director of the Caribbean Institute & Nutrition Food of Jamaica were in attendance for the Aruba meeting last week.

We succeeded in getting the Coordinator for Chronic Disease of PAHO – WHO, the Coordinator of Pan American Nutrition and Development of PAHO – WHO as well as the advisor to President Barack Obama who sits on his Council on Fitness, Sport & Nutrition/White House Task Force



on Childhood Obesity to be in attendance.

During last week's meeting they realized that the challenges regarding obesity (especially child obesity) is an issue that surpasses the realm of health with ramifications to finances, transport, agriculture and several disciplines. Several scenarios were prepared which will be discussed and voted upon in the June meeting and which will ultimately be presented in the end of the year

meeting.

In the United Nations meeting in New York they will discuss a "White Paper" which will highlight scientific aspects and most certainly address the political aspects. It is here that reference will be made to the "Aruba Declaration on Childhood Obesity" during the political deliberations regarding the changes that the world desires to make with respect to the challenges of obesity.

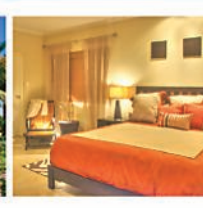
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FOTH is back in action! Pick your winner for the Superbowl and help Aruba's handicapped

Superbowl Sunday is fast approaching, and this is the last week to purchase a chance to win some big bucks, while supporting the fundraising efforts of the Friends of the Handicapped.

Begun over 20 years ago, a dedicated group of veteran island visitors started a foundation to give back to the island that has provided them with so many wonderful memories over their years. Most spend their winters on Aruba, and dedicate nearly all their time to helping various charities working with the mentally and physically challenged.

Volunteers consist of: Art Stark and his wife Alma, Philip Solomon, Sal and Maryann La Carruba, Pauline Daley, Linda Todman, David and Tana Ulmschneider and Pat and Marsha Finck, who comprise the board, with Arubans Anoushka Maduro of the Casa Del Mar and Marcelino Kock. Volunteers Jean and Huguette Vatei-



Little Olivia picking last year's winner.

quette of Canada have been essential to their success over the years, as well.

One of their core fundraising efforts is their Superbowl lottery boards paying \$750 for correctly choosing the winning score, and \$250 for a reverse score. \$20 purchases a square, and all proceeds are distributed to various worthy causes. Board President Art Stark reports that sales have

been a little slow this year, and there are still plenty of chances to win big. This is the last week to buy before the game.

FOTH also conducts a number of other events. A very special way to show your Valentine how much you care is to take them to the Sweetheart Dinner Dance, which will be in the Radisson Ballroom on Saturday, February 19. A very popular event for islanders and vacationers to mix and mingle, it includes a one hour cocktail hour prior to a 3-course dinner including unlimited wine, with dancing to a popular local band. This is the evening when they conduct their famous raffle drawing, with \$2000 cash the grand prize, and many other valuable items including fine jewelry. Raffle tickets are on sale for \$100 each, and only 100 tickets are sold. Tickets to the Sweetheart's Dinner Dance can be purchased at the

concierge desk in the Radisson Resort, Casino & Spa and the executive offices of Casa Del Mar.

Another popular event is their fundraising bingo night. This is coming up this Friday, February 4, in the Renaissance Conference Center in Oranjestad. There are door prizes galore and the final grand prize for a full card is a whopping 5,000 Aruban florins, (\$2857.) Prizes start at 250 Aruban florins and increase with each game; there will be ten games played. A card costs 20 Aruban florins, (\$12.) Tickets sales will be at the door starting at 5:00 p.m., the games begin at 8:00 p.m., sharp.

FOTH conducts a weekly raffle drawing for a dinner for two, kindly donated by The French Steakhouse in the Manchebo Beach Resort. Tickets are only \$10 and the drawing is every Wednesday at 7:30 in the Casa Del Mar lobby.

Friends of the Handi-

capped volunteers can be found in the Casa Del Mar lobby every day between the hours of 10:30 and 11:30 a.m., in the afternoons from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. and in the evening from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Several Aruban foundations depend heavily on the support of FOTH to continue helping those in need, and they have donated over one million dollars to assist the handicapped, over the years.

A small investment for those in need accomplishes a great deal as well as offering a special reward, whether you win or not; volunteers are scrupulous in the conduct of the contests, and winners need not be on island to collect.

For more information on upcoming events and purchasing raffle tickets call Art Stark at 567-4102 or 586-3273, Linda Todman at 586-8569 or Dave at 568-8199.

By Rosalie Klein

Sci-Tech



This May 2009 Handout combo picture received from Atmosphere and Ocean Research Institute, the University of Tokyo, on February 2, 2011 shows egg (L) and fry (R) of Japanese eel, collected near the West Mariana Ridge and incubate above the researcher boat. Japanese researchers have collected natural eel eggs for the first time ever near the West Mariana Ridge, paving the way for promoting eel farming to feed big eel eaters. AFP PHOTO

Google slams Microsoft for 'cheating'

WASHINGTON (AFP) – The world's biggest Internet search company, Google, is accusing rival Microsoft's Bing of copying its results, a charge Microsoft denies.

"Some Bing results increasingly look like an incomplete, stale version of Google results -- a cheap imitation," said Amit Singhal, one of the company's search engineers, on Google's official blog.

The allegations were first reported by search news website, Search Engine Land.

Google had noted that in the summer of 2010 Bing did not return any results for a misspelled search for the surgical eye procedure "tarsor-rhaphy."

LG's first tablet to hit US market in March



SEOUL (AFP) – LG Electronics said it would release its first tablet computer in the United States in March as it prepares to go head to head with Apple's iPad.

LG said the G-slate was among the first tablet models to run on the "Honeycomb" operating system, which is Google's latest generation of Android platforms designed for mobile devices with large screens.

The G-slate features a 8.9-inch screen, smaller than the iPad's nearly 10-inch display but larger than the seven-inch screen of Samsung Electron-

"Later in the summer, Bing started returning our first result to their users without offering the spell correction," Singhal said. "This was very strange."

The experiment was repeated with nonsensical searches, including "hiybbprqag," "delhipublic-school40 chdjob," and "juegosdebenlogrande," which Google had designed to produce one result. Bing offered the same result, Google said.

But Microsoft argued its search was different.

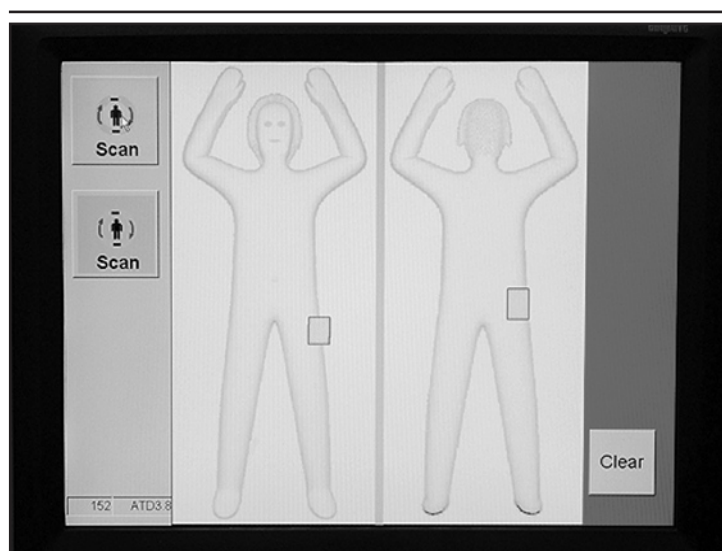
"What we saw in today's story was a spy-novelesque stunt to generate extreme outliers in tail query ranking," said Bing corporate vice pres-

ident Harry Shum in an official blog post.

"It was a creative tactic by a competitor, and we'll take it as a back-handed compliment. But it doesn't accurately portray how we use opt-in customer data as one of many inputs to help improve our user experience."

"We use over 1,000 different signals and features in our ranking algorithm," adding that some of those features include data from users who agree to share anonymous data "as they navigate the web in order to help us improve the experience for all users."

"We all learn from our collective customers, and we all should," he said.



LAS VEGAS, NV: A monitor shows a generic body image from an advanced image technology (AIT) millimeter wave scanner using new Automated Target Recognition software being tested by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration at McCarran International Airport February 1, 2011 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The new software detects potential threat items and displays them on the outline of a generic body displayed on a monitor attached to the unit instead of using passenger-specific images. TSA officers will no longer need to use a remotely located room to view the images, which will make the process more efficient according to a TSA spokesman. (AFP photo)





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Google, Facebook, Twitter sound off on Egypt

WASHINGTON (AFP) – Google, Facebook and Twitter, breaking with the usual practice of corporate silence, are speaking out forcefully against the Internet blockade by the Egyptian authorities.

As Egypt is rocked by continuing protests against President Hosni Mubarak, the three companies spawned by the Internet have criticized the attempt by the authorities to sever the nation of 80 million people from the Web.

While corporate responsibility has been a front-burner issue since companies were pressured into cutting ties with apartheid South Africa decades ago, experts said the statements and moves by the three Web giants were unusual.

"Usually with most corporations the issue is what's going to make profits, not necessarily what's going to do good for the world," said

Benjamin Hermalin, a finance professor at the University of California, Berkeley's Haas School of Business.

"Particularly given a situation of political uncertainty it would be very strange for companies to take bets on one side because if the other side wins they're in deep trouble," Hermalin said.

The uncertainty in Egypt did not stop Facebook, which had about five million active users in the country before the Internet shutdown, from issuing a statement saying that "no one should be denied access to the Internet."

"Although the turmoil in Egypt is a matter for the Egyptian people and their government to resolve, limiting Internet access for millions of people is a matter of concern for the global community," Facebook spokesman Andrew Noyes said.

Google and Twitter went considerably further than merely expressing concern, jointly creating a tool to allow Egyptians to bypass the Internet closure and post messages to Twitter by making telephone calls.

Google said the "Speak to Tweet" service, which turns voice messages into "tweets," was aimed at "helping people in Egypt stay connected at this very difficult time."

Google-owned YouTube also highlighted videos from Egypt on its news and politics channel, CitizenTube, invited users to submit their own and began streaming live coverage of broadcasts by the Al Jazeera television network.

Google also created a "Crisis Response" page featuring links to the "Speak to Tweet" tool, CitizenTube, emergency telephone numbers and Google Maps of where protests have been occurring in Egypt

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Health & Living

Cancer drug, when combined, boosts death risk, study says

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The cancer drug Avastin, also known as bevacizumab, is linked to a higher risk of death when combined with chemotherapy, said a study in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The drug has previously been found to raise the risk of blood clots in the legs and lungs by 33 percent, and in December the US Food and Drug Administration said it was neither safe nor effective against breast cancer.

Bevacizumab, marketed as Avastin by the Swiss drug giant Roche, has been approved for use in combination with chemotherapy for treating colorectal cancer, non-small cell lung cancer and renal cell carcinoma.

The growth of new blood vessels helps spread cancer and Avastin is designed to fight the disease by inhibiting the proliferation of new blood vessels.

After conducting a review and meta-analysis of a total

of 10,217 patients with advanced solid tumors studied in 16 different trials, researchers reported the overall incidence of fatal adverse events with bevacizumab was 2.5 percent.

The height of the risk varied across different treatments, and depended on the type of chemotherapy it was administered alongside, but not the type of tumor or drug dose, the study said.

Hemorrhage, a blood disorder called neutropenia, holes in the gastrointestinal tract, pulmonary embolism and stroke were the most frequent causes of fatal bleeding linked to the drug, the study said.

Thus, oncologists are forced to dilute the potential effects of bevacizumab by exposing all treated patients, and society, to enormous costs and occasional life-threatening toxic effects. These unfortunate circumstances are sad for those who pay the bills -- and sadder for patients with solid tumors

Five new gene links to Parkinson's disease

PARIS, France (AFP) — An international consortium of scientists has found five variants of genes which are linked to Parkinson's disease, bringing the tally to 11, according to a paper published by The Lancet.

Until the first genetic clue was found in 1997, the medical consensus was that Parkinson's had environmental -- in other words, non-inherited -- causes.

The five variants were netted in an overview of genomic studies carried out by scientists in Britain, Germany, France, Iceland, the Netherlands and the United States.

None of the tiny DNA changes is responsible by itself for causing for this complex disease of the nervous system, but in conjunction with other variants, boosts the risk of it.

The 20 percent of patients who had the highest number of variants were two and a half times likelier to develop Parkinson's compared to the 20 percent with the least variants, the researchers found.

Parkinson's is a motor-system disorder which primarily affects people over the age of 50 and can lead to such severe trembling, stiffness and loss of balance that patients have trou-



ble walking, talking or performing basic tasks.

The disease has been traced to the loss of cells which produce dopamine, a neurotransmitter that ferries chemical messages within the brain.

There is no known cure, although the condition can be alleviated by a dopamine

substitute.

That means the new findings are of limited use for clinicians, but they do add powerfully to the store of fundamental knowledge about the disease, the commonest neurodegenerative disorder after Alzheimer's, the investigators said.

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Training of Aruba Militia starts



20 young Aruban men presented themselves at the Marine Camp in Savaneta to undergo 16 weeks of training for the Aruban Marines Militia Corps.

The marines are part of the Elementary Department at the Aruban Militia (ARUMIL) courses, held at the Marine Camp. During the training they are subject to eight field bivouacs, where various military techniques are taught, in-

cluding combat skills, military assistance and guard services. The young ARUMIL will face all aspects of life and survival in the field under primitive conditions, taking the first steps towards developing camaraderie and discipline.

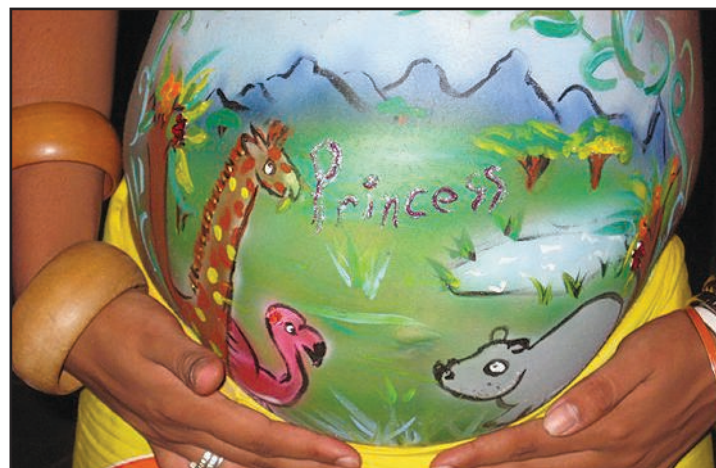
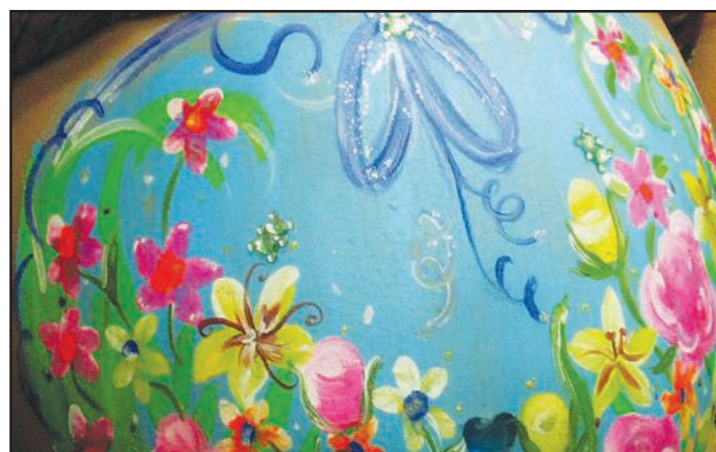
Military assistance

The Aruban Militia is presently comprised of 67 marines. Besides surveillance and security tasks, the platoon

takes part in training and activities of the Royal Dutch Marines who are stationed at the camp in Savaneta. The ARUMIL can also be used for military assistance and relief work. Their most recent such assignment was to participate in the relief operation in Haiti in 2010.

Photo shows the 20 Marines about to begin their training at the Marine Camp in Savaneta

Something great for expecting moms -- win a belly paint!



Arawak Mums together with Make-Up Artist Beth is offering all moms a gift to remember, which will fill their heart and belly full of love.

As of today until Saturday, February 4, pregnant women are invited to visit the Arawak Mums Facebook page www.facebook.com/weary-ourbaby and post their Sweet Belly story. Entries provide the

chance to win a Maternity Belly Paint. The belly painting will be done on Saturday, February 5, or Monday, February 7.

The winners will be announced on Facebook.

For more information, interested moms can call 743-9816, email info@arawakmums.com or Blackberry pin 20CA2BD1.

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Divi Links hosts first Links Ladies Tournament of the Year



The Divine Nine entertained a great number of female golfers for a fun tournament, the first of eleven tournaments planned for 2011. Tabitha Fecunda, Island Marketing & Promotion Manager, The Links at Divi



Aruba, reports the group teed off at 3 p.m. and congregated at Mulligan's Golf Bar & Restaurant for a flute of champagne and a New Year toast, by 5:30 p.m., having played the challenging nine hole

course.

Fate intervened and the General Manager of the Hershey Country Club in Hershey Pennsylvania, the sweetest place on earth, home of Hershey Chocolates, happened to



be visiting Divi's Managing Director Alex Nieuwmeyer. Maarten van Wijk immediately offered to raffle a golf vacation at his resort among the Links Ladies, promoting Golf Hershey and its famed spa paired with numerous golf courses to

the local golf enthusiasts.

Nieuwmeyer explains that so far 44 members signed up for the Links Ladies program of 2011 and the golf course would like to encourage many more ladies to join.

Michael Tromp presents his book "Ange Perez: Aruban Soccer Idol" to Aruba National Library

ORANJESTAD – Recently, Aruba National Library Director Astrid Britten was proud to receive the original Papiamentu book by Michael Tromp, "Ange Perez: Idolo di Aruba su Futbol". It traces the career of one of Aruba's most admired professional soccer players, who started his career with the team Jong Aruba; afterwards he enjoyed a very successful career with the Bubali team.

An outstanding player, Ange attracted the attention of a Venezuelan scout who signed him to play with the Venezuelan professional team Deportivo Portuguesa; Ange toured with them for more than 6 years.

In 1973, Ange returned to Aruba and played for the Estrella team of Santa Cruz. He



represented Aruba and The Netherlands Antilles in various international sporting events including the Copa Antiyano.

Ange disappeared during a tragedy at sea on October 25,

1979. Recently a street in Sabana Liber neighborhood of Aruba – where Ange was born – was dedicated to his memory and has been renamed "Calla Ange Perez."



COMICS



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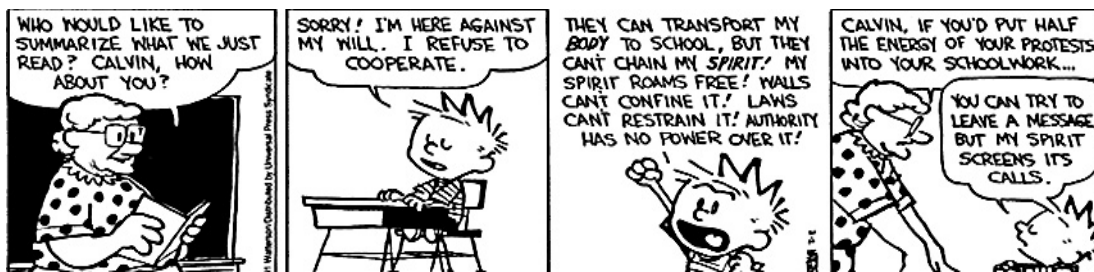
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CALVIN and HOBBS



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ACROSS

1. Pepper's partner
5. Hit flies
9. Go by car
13. Forest member
14. Hue

16. Region
17. Scan a book
18. Speak publicly
19. Gasp
20. Tavern
21. Ado
22. Swoons

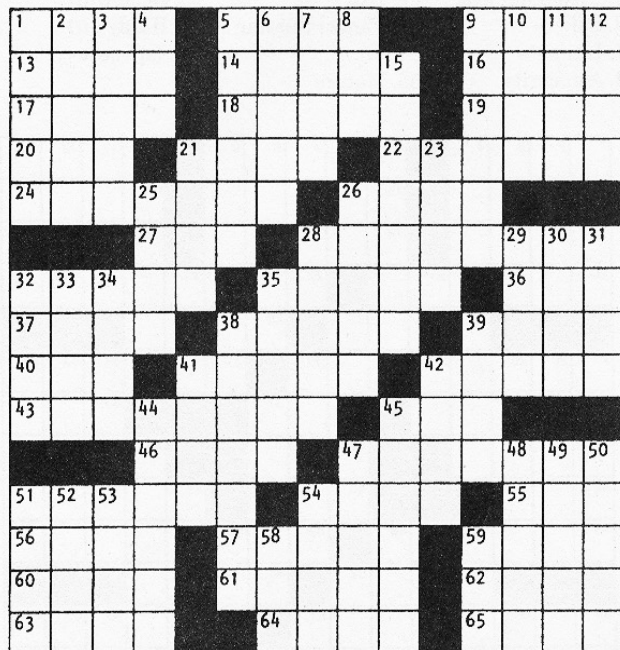
24. Grazing land
26. Entice
27. Beast of burden
28. Sorrows
32. Book designation
35. Maine trees
36. Seance sound
37. False god
38. Adjusted a piano

39. Watering tube
40. Building wing
41. Ambulance horn
42. Feasted
43. Took out taxes
45. Beige
46. Memo
47. Dress design
51. Say a poem
54. Mind
55. Born
56. Revise copy
57. Cook a turkey
59. Actor Cronyn
60. Building location
61. Fe Trail
62. Bone-dry
63. Golf gadgets
64. Sharp
65. Procures

10. Persia, nowadays
11. Fender mishap
12. Devours
15. Declined
21. Circuit breaker
23. Greek war god
25. Lofty
26. Flax fabric
28. Dug ore
29. Press clothes
30. Comfort
31. Raced
32. Evened the score
33. Not busy
34. Narrated
35. Thick soup
38. Giggles
39. Clue
41. Resident of Edinburgh
42. Social appointment
44. Joins
45. Kilt pattern
47. Glue
48. Harden
49. Send payment
50. Requires
51. Take it easy
52. Songstress Adams
53. Quote
54. Walking stick
58. Acorn tree
59. Crone

DOWN

1. "77 Sunset"
2. Circus ring
3. Tilts
4. Senator Kennedy's nickname
5. Scrubs vigorously
6. In poorer shape
7. Mournful cry
8. Small child
9. Long, narrow sword



Courtesy of



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Sudoku



SOLUTION

8	6	4	2	8	2	1	9	9
1	2	5	9	6	7	6	2	8
8	2	9	1	6	5	7	8	2
5	1	2	8	7	2	8	9	6
4	8	6	8	9	9	2	1	2
2	9	8	6	2	1	9	8	7
9	4	2	2	1	8	8	6	9
6	5	1	4	2	8	9	2	8
2	8	8	9	9	6	2	4	1

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9. A number is Never repeated in a row or column. In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9.

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BRIEFS:

US to hit debt limit as early as April 5:

WASHINGTON (AFP) – The United States is poised to hit its legal public debt ceiling of \$14.29 trillion between April 5 and May 31, the US Treasury said as it seeks congressional action to raise the limit.

The latest Treasury estimate came amid a brewing political fight over whether Congress will raise the government's legal limit on borrowing or force the government to cut borrowing and spending, and eventually risk a default on its obligations

BBVA reports rise in 2010 net profit on Latin America:

MADRID (AFP) – BBVA, Spain's second-biggest bank, reported a 9.4 percent rise in 2010 net profit as solid results from Latin America offset continued weakness in its domestic market.

The bank posted a net profit of 4.61 billion euros (6.33 billion dollars) for the year compared to 4.21 billion euros in 2009.

Like other Spanish banks, BBVA is struggling with an economic downturn, brought about by a collapse of the country's once booming property market which has led them to increase provisioning against bad loans.

Oil price slips after spike above \$102:

LONDON (AFP) – Brent crude prices eased here one day after spiking above \$102 on stubborn fears about political turmoil in Egypt and potential knock-on effects in the oil-rich Middle East.

New York's main contract, light sweet crude for March, handed back 12 cents to \$90.65 a barrel.

London's benchmark contract had surged past \$102 as investors worried about the impact of Egypt's unrest on global oil supplies.

New York crude is vastly underperforming Brent owing to high levels of oil supplies at the Cushing depot in Oklahoma, according to analysts

Roche annual profits grow but 2010 sales dip:

ZURICH (AFP) – Swiss pharmaceutical giant Roche reported moderate growth in net profit in 2010 and signalled a "challenging" outlook as its sales dipped.

Chief executive Severin Schwan outlined a likely triple blow for business over the coming year, with continued decline in the group's key flu drug Tamiflu, a slowdown in its flagship oncology treatments and the impact of austerity programmes and health care cuts.

Roche has confirmed that the restructuring until 2012 would cost 2.7 billion francs.

The Swiss group is also facing a battle in the US after the US Food and Drug Administration said in December that the company's key anti cancer drug Avastin was neither safe nor effective against breast cancer.

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Google slams Microsoft for 'cheating'



WASHINGTON (AFP) – The world's biggest Internet search company, Google, is accusing rival Microsoft's Bing of copying its results, a charge Microsoft denies.

"Some Bing results increasingly look like an incomplete, stale version of Google results -- a cheap imitation," said Amit Singhal, one of the company's search engineers, on Google's official blog.

The allegations were first reported by search news website, Search Engine Land.

Google had noted that in the summer of 2010 Bing did

not return any results for a misspelled search for the surgical eye procedure "tarsorrhaphy."

"Later in the summer, Bing started returning our first result to their users without offering the spell correction," Singhal said. "This was very strange."

The experiment was repeated with nonsensical searches, including "hiybb-prqag," "delhipublicschool40 chdjob," and "juegosdebenlo grande," which Google had designed to produce one result. Bing offered the same result, Google said.

But Microsoft argued its search was different.

"What we saw in today's story was a spy-novelsque stunt to generate extreme outliers in tail query ranking,"

said Bing corporate vice president Harry Shum in an official blog post.

"It was a creative tactic by a competitor, and we'll take it as a back-handed compliment. But it doesn't accurately portray how we use opt-in customer data as one of many inputs to help improve our user experience."

"We use over 1,000 different signals and features in our ranking algorithm," adding that some of those features include data from users who agree to share anonymous data "as they navigate the web in order to help us improve the experience for all users."

"We all learn from our collective customers, and we all should," he said.

Spain signs 'grand social pact' for economic overhaul

MADRID (AFP) – Spain's government, unions and business leaders signed a "grand social pact" on sweeping reforms to revive the economy and cut a sky-high jobless rate.

The deal is critical to Spain's campaign to convince the markets that it can push through difficult labour reforms so as to speed up the economy, cut spending, and finance the debt.

Lurking in the minds of investors is the fear that Spain may fall into the debt quagmire that swamped Ireland and Greece, forcing it to request a bailout from the European Union and the International Monetary Fund.

"This agreement has three objectives: growth, jobs and the sustainability of our public finances," Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero said in a speech after the signing ceremony. "We will show that we belong to the group of great nations that knows how to stand up and walk again after going through a period of serious difficulty."

The central plank of the deal was an agreement reached after months of negotiations to raise the retirement age to 67 from 65 by 2027.

The retirement deal includes exceptions, for example allowing people with dangerous or arduous jobs to retire before 67, as demanded by Spain's two biggest unions, the



People wait in line for the opening of a government job center in Madrid, 2009

UGT and the CCOO.

But it has nevertheless been welcomed by markets, nervous that Social Security payments could spiral out of control in the decades to come as pensioner numbers expand.

Unions had threatened to call a general strike if the government pushed ahead with a reform of the pension system without taking their demands into account.

In September unions staged the first general strike since Zapatero's Socialist government came to power in 2004, furious over labour law reforms making it easier to fire workers.

The government is determined to deepen those reforms, however, to cut a jobless rate that hit a 13-year record of 20.33 percent at the end of 2010, the highest in the industrialised world.

The pact, also introduces a

new subsidy of 400 euros (550 dollars) to jobless workers whose benefits have run out and who are in training and incentives to hire unemployed youths.

Zapatero said the pact included an agreement on the "basic principles" of a reform to Spain's collective bargaining system, which ensures joint wage rises across sectors and industries are also in the pact.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

SALT	SWAT	RIDE
TREE	COLOR	AREA
READ	ORATE	PANT
INN	FUSS	FANTS
PASTURE	LURE	
ASS	HISERIES	
TITLE	PINES	RAP
IDOL	TUNED	HOSE
ELL	SIREN	DINED
DEDUCTED	TAN	
NOTE	PATTERN	
RECITE	CARE	NEE
EDIT	ROAST	HUME
SITE	SANTA	ARID
TEES	KEEN	GETS

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For more information about The Residences, visit our sales office located in the golf clubhouse at the Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort.

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Popular Pizza Bob's is perfect for casual dining



A popular hangout with Eagle Beach temporary residents



Swedish sisters Sharla and Carolina are huge fans of Pizza Bob's

Everyone has those nights when they want an easy, casual meal, and among denizens of the Eagle Beach area, their favorite place for fun food and friendly surroundings is Pizza Bob's, right next to the Bucuti Beach resort parking lot.

Maitre D' Alex adores welcoming his abundant repeat clientele, being five minutes walk from most of Aruba's timeshares has made the place a prime eatery among families with healthy appetites. Their pizza is modeled on the classic thin crust typical of Chicago's Southside, and the secret recipe of a famous pizzeria since 1957, which we dare not name as we might get whacked!

While checking out the locale, Alex introduced us to Sharla and Caroline from Sweden, frequent visitors to Aruba who can't imagine a vacation without several dinner stops at Pizza Bob's. This was the general consensus of all the guests who we spoke with during our time there; all make it a multiple meal choice during their vacation. "I have one couple from Germany who eat here every night of their vacation," confessed Alex, "they are

like family to us!"

Aside from the famous pizzas, the menu features very tasty barbecue, a personal favorite of Caroline, lasagna, Fresh Vegetable Linguini and huge salads that can be shared by two, plus a personal favorite for dessert, "Death by Chocolate." They do sport an air-conditioned dining room, which is popular at lunch time to escape the tropical mid-day sun, but nighttime is the right time to enjoy their outdoor terrace and great music from noted island singer Tommy every Wednesday and Saturday night, which converts the eatery into a congenial hangout until closing time.

If you love your pizza and island ambiance, Pizza Bob's is the perfect place for a fun night. Open for lunch and dinner every day from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., and they deliver to all the resorts in the Eagle Beach area. Call 588 9040 ext. 790 for delivery or to pre-order. They also feature a daily happy hour from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. when you can enjoy a large size pizza for the price of a medium and drinks are 2-for-1; what a deal!

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'Rent-a-girlfriend' hoax causes stir in France



rentagirlfriend.com) asked last month, stressing that the "rental services" it offered were strictly non-sexual.

After creating an Internet buzz where chat rooms fought over the morality and legality of renting out fake girlfriends, all was confirmed to be a marketing ploy for a site selling classified ads.

PARIS (AFP) – A hoax web-site in France has revealed something poignant in modern society by offering to rent men a girlfriend who can stun relatives, friends or business partners with their charm and beauty.

"Have you had enough of being alone? Had enough of your wife?" loueunepetite-amie.com (translatable as

The Philippines nabs Japanese in fake marriage scam

MANILA, The Philippines (AFP) – Philippine authorities said they arrested a Japanese man wanted over a fake marriage scam after he walked into the immigration bureau to renew his own visa.

Immigration deputy chief Ronaldo Ledesma said Yoshifumi Fujii, 49, was promptly arrested after a surprise appearance at the bureau's Manila headquarters last week to renew his expired visa.

"We were already looking for him after authorities in Tokyo requested assistance, but he basically walked into his own detention," Ledesma told AFP.

"Japanese police and Interpol agents will arrive soon to bring him back to Japan and he will also be blacklisted from returning here."

Fujii operated a crime syndicate preying on Filipino women willing to pay money for fake Japanese marriages, Ledesma said.

"He charges them money and arranges the marriages



with Japanese men. Once the woman arrives in Japan, she can now work and the man later leaves or divorces her," he said.

"It also works both ways, because the Japanese man can now stay in the Philippines and put up businesses."

Ledesma said investigations by Japanese authorities discovered that Fujii had entered fake documents in the marriage registries at several towns in Japan's Aichi prefecture.

Some of the couples were arrested in May last year, but Fujii fled to the Philippines before police could enforce an arrest warrant issued by a local court.

Globes organizers deny new invite for Gervais



LOS ANGELES (AFP) – The organizers of the Golden Globes denied a claim by British comic Ricky Gervais that they had invited him to host their show again, despite a row over his sharply barbed jokes at last month's awards.

In a Globes diary for British celebrity magazine Heat, Ger-

vais said he had been asked about hosting the Globes for a third year running by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA).

His performance triggered huge amounts of publicity. "I don't know what I could do better... The ratings went up again, and the organizers asked me to consider a third year," he said, while adding: I don't think I should."

But HFPA head Phil Berk - who was among those targeted personally by Gervais at the January 16 show -- said there was no invitation: "There is no truth to this rumor. We have not asked him to come back.

"Nice try, Ricky," he added.

The creator of hit comedy "The Office" came under fire for remarks including about Mel Gibson's alleged anti-Semitism, Robert Downey Jr's past drug problems, and Charlie Sheen's reputation for drinking.

He also took a shot at the HFPA for allegedly taking bribes, and quipped that before coming on stage he had to get HFPA head Berk "off the toilet and pop his teeth back in."

The British comic, who has become a major star in Hollywood, has insisted no one took offense. "I have yet to find anyone who was actually offended by it," he said.

British TV show 'Top Gear' upsets Mexico

LONDON (AFP) – Mexico's ambassador to Britain has complained to the BBC over the popular TV show "Top Gear", saying its presenters made "offensive, xenophobic and humiliating" comments about his country.

Eduardo Medina-Mora has written to the BBC about "insults" made by Richard Hammond, Jeremy Clarkson and James May in the show broadcast in Britain.

In a discussion about a Mexican sports car, Hammond said vehicles reflected national characteristics so "Mexican cars are just going to be lazy".

The "outrageous, vulgar and inexcusable insults" risked stirring "bigoted feelings against the Mexican people", the ambassador wrote.

Reviewing the Mastretta,



Hammond said: "Mexican cars are just going to be lazy, feckless, flatulent, overweight, leaning against a fence asleep looking at a cactus with a blanket with a hole in the middle on as a coat."

The presenters then described Mexican food as "sick with cheese on it".

Later in the exchange, Clarkson said "we won't get any complaints about this because the Mexican ambassador's going to be sitting there with a remote control

like this" -- and he slumped down in his chair and faked a snore.

The BBC did not comment on the complaint but said it would respond directly to the ambassador.

Hundreds of viewers complained in 2008 after Clarkson joked about lorry drivers murdering prostitutes.

Last week, the programme was named most popular factual show at Britain's National TV Awards.

Nepal's oldest temple bans courting couples

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AFP) – Nepal's oldest and holiest Hindu temple is to introduce fines to deter "amorous behaviour" on its premises after becoming a favourite spot for courting couples, its management said.

The committee that runs the sprawling Pashupati temple complex on the outskirts of the Nepalese capital Kathmandu said it also planned to fine smokers and anyone taking photographs in an effort to clean up the holy site.

"The couples sit on the stairs leading to one of the temples. On any given day you can find one on each step," the committee's treasurer Narottam Vaidya told AFP.

"From now, couples found hugging or indulging in amorous behaviour will face a



Pashupati Temple

fine, under new rules introduced to discourage such inappropriate activities in the Pashupati area."

The rules will be enforced by a team of security guards deployed to protect the complex, Vaidya said. Anyone found breaking them faces a

fine of up to 500 rupees (\$7).

The Pashupati temple complex, a UNESCO world heritage site, covers 2.6 square kilometres (one square mile) on the banks of the holy Bagmati river and attracts thousands of pilgrims every year, mostly from neighbouring India.

Vaidya said standards of behaviour at the complex had deteriorated and many people were now using their mobile phones to take pictures of the centuries-old temples, even though photography is banned.

"It has been difficult to control because people can easily hide their phones. But from now we will be stricter about monitoring people and anyone violating the rules will be fined," he added.

Thorpe to return for London Olympics



"I never thought this would happen. I never thought that I'd be swimming in a competitive way again."

"I'm very glad that I am. I'm glad I spent four years away from the pool. I needed those four years," added Thorpe, 28.

Nicknamed "Thorpedo", the imposing freestyler retired from swimming in November 2006 aged 24 after a decade in the sport, following a long period of illness and introspection.

Thorpe said he was coming back as a "slightly more mature" person and said he was being driven by a desire "to be able to perform again", not the lure of sponsorship money.

He said his focus would be on swimming the relay for Australia -- an event in which he famously broke the American stranglehold and bagged gold at the Sydney 2000 Olympics -- over both 100 and 200 metres.

Thorpe said he did not believe he had enough time to prepare for the 400 metres, his favourite event, but would instead train as a sprinter, something he said "may surprise a lot of people".

Sporting a deep tan, the self-effacing Thorpe seemed at ease with the huge press contingent, joking that contesting another Olympics was on his list of must-dos before he turned 30, along with joining a rock band and becoming a pilot.

"This seemed the most realistic," he laughed.

He refused to detail what times he was clocking, saying only that he had lost five kilograms (11 pounds) and was "swimming faster than when I began, which is a very good sign because I was actually pretty bad."

Thorpe would not be drawn on his famed rivalry with the United States' Michael Phelps, always the major threat in his competitive past.

"You say there's a rivalry, I think of the American team as my friends as well. We wish them well, but not too well, (that) can be the official message."

Nugent said Thorpe would have to wait nine months be-

fore he'd be cleared by doping authorities to compete, meaning he would have just five months to hone himself against other swimmers before the Olympic trials next March.

His first overseas tournament is likely to be a FINA World Cup event in November, with his first Australian contest to be the following month.

"Ian looks to be in pretty good shape, and I know he's been enjoying being back in the water," Nugent said.

"We know he is an outstanding athlete, and with application and commitment he will make a success of this comeback."

Thorpe plans to do most of his training in Abu Dhabi and Europe ahead of the London Olympic trials and acknowledged there was a long road ahead.

"It's big, it's enormous, but I'm prepared," he said.

"I've had an almost flawless career and I've put that at risk. It would have been a lot easier to sit on that and not do a thing but I still have a desire, there's things in swimming that I haven't done that I would like to achieve."

Five-time Olympic champion Thorpe won 11 world titles and set 13 long-course records before announcing his retirement from swimming in November 2006 after 10 years on the Australian team, saying he had lost the desire to compete.

His 400m freestyle world record, set at the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games, is still just 1/100th of a second behind the current record, which was achieved with a banned bodysuit at the 2009 world championships in Rome.

Commonwealth Games, is still just 1/100th of a second behind the current record, which was achieved with a banned bodysuit at the 2009 world championships in Rome.

Nagatomo and Sneijder in Inter squad

ROME (AFP) - New Japan international signing Yuto Nagatomo and Dutch playmaker Wesley Sneijder have been included in Inter Milan's squad to face Bari on Thursday.

The 24-year-old Nagatomo joined Inter on transfer deadline day on Monday with fellow full-back Davide Santon heading the other way to Cesena.

And Inter coach Leonardo, who used to play in Japan for Kashima Antlers, says Nagatomo's arrival at the European champions shows how far the country's football has progressed.

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Ronaldo has a 'screw loose': Pandiani



Walter Pandiani

MADRID (AFP) - Real Madrid star striker Cristiano Ronaldo "has a screw loose", Osasuna forward Walter Pandiani blasted Wednesday after the pair clashed during Real's shock weekend loss.

Ronaldo and Pandiani reportedly exchanged angry words during half-time in Osasuna's 1-0 victory over Real Madrid, which left Real's archrivals Barcelona seven

points clear at the top of the league.

According to media reports, Ronaldo sparked the row by asking Pandiani how much he earned, and the Osasuna player replied by mentioning the trophies he had won.

"You have to be more humble. When he wins the Supercups, the King's Cups that I have in Spain then maybe I will listen to him," Osasuna's Uruguayan striker told a news conference.

"As a footballer he is a phenomenon but to do the things he does, maybe he has a screw loose," Pandiani added.

"With his gestures and his cocky way of acting, he is the one who creates all the problems every weekend."

Pandiani advised Ronaldo to learn from Barcelona's Lionel Messi who he described as "the best in the world."

Also in the side is Dutch international Sneijder who has not played since limping out of the Club World Cup semi-final against Koreans Seongnam Ilhwa in mid-December.

However, although he is in the squad, there is no guarantee he will actually play.

"Sneijder's been out for 50 days, which is a long time. We have to look at many things, amongst them the state of the other midfielders and that's also one reason he's been selected," added Leonardo.

The Brazilian has several first team players out injured but has included Esteban

Cambiasso, who was a major doubt.

However, French-born Morocco midfielder Housine Kharja could make his first start for the team following his transfer window arrival and an impressive debut as a substitute against Palermo at the weekend.

For Kharja, who began his youth career with Paris St Germain, playing for former PSG star Leonardo is a great honour.

"I'm delighted to have joined the world champions and the best team in Italy," he said.

SYDNEY (AFP) - Five-time Olympic freestyle champion Ian Thorpe announced his return to swimming for the 2012 London games Wednesday, saying he could "actually taste" his desire to compete.

"Ian Thorpe is very much back," said John Borghetti of sponsor Virgin Blue, opening a joint press conference with Thorpe.

"He registered this morning with the international drug testing register and he's planning to win lots of gold at the 2012 Olympics."

Australia's most decorated Olympian, Thorpe said he decided to return to the sport back in September and started training on the sly, using eight different pools to dodge suspicion and telling friends to "lie through their teeth" about his plans.

Touring the "extraordinary" Olympic swimming venue in London sealed his decision, he said.

"I could actually taste it -- I haven't felt like swimming like that for a very long time."

He sketched out a plan for his comeback with sports psychologist Deirdre Anderson, who helped counsel him through his 2006 retirement, and was secretly trained via text message by Australia's team coach Leigh Nugent.

Thorpe was so determined to minimise the pressure on himself he didn't tell his family until just a few weeks ago, and Nugent supervised his training just once in the four months.

"It hasn't been something that I have taken lightly, making a decision to return to competitive swimming," Thorpe told reporters.

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Westwood, Kaymer battle for top spot in Qatar



Westwood (L), Kaymer (R)

DOHA (AFP) - Lee Westwood and Martin Kaymer face off in a potentially thrilling battle for supremacy when the 2.5 million dollar Qatar Masters begins at the Doha Golf Club on Thursday.

It marks the first time in 17 years that two Europeans take centre stage as the world's first and second ranked players at a regular European Tour event, something that gives the Qatar Masters pride of place in the four-leg "Desert

Swing" that began in Abu Dhabi last month and concludes with the Dubai Desert Classic next week.

Coincidentally it was another English-German duo of Nick Faldo and Bernhard Langer who last went head to head at the Irish Open at Mount Juliet in 1993 as the World No.1 and No.2, a tournament subsequently won by the Englishman, adding an extra edge to the contest between Westwood and Kaymer

in Qatar.

Westwood will be making his sixth consecutive appearance in Qatar without ever having won the title, although he was just one shot off the lead going into the final round last year before cracking the face of his driver and struggling to find the fairways on a course he believes suits his style of play.

"It's a golf course that suits me down to the ground really," Westwood said.

"When you get rough like Doha, you would say it's a good driver's golf course so I would expect it to suit me.

"It's almost like a Major Championship setup - a US Open - with firm greens and thick rough. With its firm greens, you can get close to the flags but you need to be mentally strong as it is a thinking man's golf course."

The Englishman however dismissed suggestions that he was under pressure as the World No. 1 with Kaymer breathing down his neck, especially since his runaway win in Abu Dhabi which leapfrogged him ahead of

Tiger Woods to become the World No.2.

"There is no pressure as such of being No.1. It was a reward for having played well," said Westwood.

With a field boasting four players from the world top seven and eight from the top 20, easily making the tournament the strongest yet in its 14-year history, Westwood and Kaymer have enough competition with Englishmen Paul Casey and Ian Poulter, South Africans Retief Goosen and Louis Oosthuizen, American Steve Stricker and defending champion Robert Karlsson all eyeing the top prize.

Steelers bad boy Harrison blasts NFL commissioner

DALLAS (AFP) - Pittsburgh Steelers bad boy James Harrison says the NFL's crack-down on illegal hits to the head is turning the America's most watched sport into a game of weekend flag football.

Harrison, who has been slapped with about 125,000 dollars in fines this season, says he is being unfairly singled out making him the league's poster boy for bad behaviour.

"It is getting to the point where I think they are just going to have to go and put flags on us to at least protect the quarterback because that is what it really comes down

to," said Harrison.

"Tell me how many people would watch the games if you went and put flags on everybody. See how popular the game is then."

Harrison's Steelers will face the Green Bay Packers in Super Bowl 45 on Sunday at Cowboys Stadium.

Flag football is a non-tackle version of American gridiron usually played on weekends by recreational players who try to strip flags from their opponents' waist.

Harrison's long list of fines for vicious hits included a 75,000 dollar penalty for a hit on Cleveland Browns receiver Mohamed Massaquoi.

He feels he is being unfairly blamed for the Massaquoi hit and the others.

"They might have been looking for a poster boy to implement their rule and they just chose me," he said.

Harrison said commissioner Roger Goodell's tough stance on hard hits is driven by revenues.

"The league is doing whatever they need to do that helps them make more money. If you hit Tom Brady or Peyton Manning and you concuss them and they can't play the next game, a lot of people might not tune in to watch. It is whatever makes them more money."



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Pittsburgh hopes to avoid another Packers shootout



Steelers coach Tomlin

DALLAS, Texas (AFP) — Pittsburgh coach Mike Tomlin said Monday he hopes to avoid another shootout with Green Bay when the Steelers and Packers square off in Super Bowl 45.

The National Football League championship game on Sunday will be the first meeting between the two teams since the third-to-last game of the 2009 season, when Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger hooked up with receiver Mike Wallace for the winning touchdown on the final play of the game for a 37-36 win.

"That was an exciting entertaining game we had against them a year ago," Tomlin said. "We were fortunate enough to get a win but what happened in Heinz Field in 2009 is going to have no bearing in this stadium. So many of the components of these teams are different."

The Steelers are seeking their third Super Bowl ring in the past six years. They beat the Arizona Cardinals 27-23 to capture Super Bowl 43 in Tampa.

"We are excited about it," Tomlin said of his team's return to the NFL's championship extravaganza. "But it is not going to paralyze us. We are not going to dwell on it or over-analyze it."

One intriguing aspect of the Steelers' game plan will be

who will start at centre after Tomlin revealed on Monday that first-round draft pick Maurkice Pouncey likely suffered a broken bone in his foot in the American Conference championship game.

"I am sure you could characterize it as that (fracture)," Tomlin said. "We have been very aggressive in terms of treating it, even putting a hard cast and so forth. He is not on a running clock until Wednesday."

Tomlin is hopeful that Pouncey, who was helped off the field during Pittsburgh's opening drive against the New York Jets, is a quick healer.

If Pouncey can't go then the center spot would be filled by second-year pro Doug Legursky. Against the Jets, Legursky relieved Pouncey and played the rest of the game. But Super Bowl 45 would be his first NFL start.

Green Bay certainly can't match the recent success of the Steelers but they have a storied history dating back to the Bart Starr and Vince Lombardi-era of the 1960s.

Packers coach Mike McCarthy said the key this week will be keeping his players focused on playing the Steelers and not thinking too much about this being the grand stage.

"Just don't look into the lights, that will probably help you," McCarthy said Monday shortly after the team touched down in Dallas. "Our players are excited to get down here today. Like a lot of us, we wish the game was already here."

The teams have outdoor practices scheduled but severe weather in the Dallas area could disrupt those plans and force the clubs to move to indoor training facilities.

Organizers plan to keep the stadium roof closed for the Super Bowl.

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